THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. No such reports have been received.

(b) The following steps have been taken to conserve the Ganga Dolphins:

1. The Gangetic Dolphin has been included in Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 providing maximum protection to the species.
2. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has funded to carry out studies on Habitat Preference, Population Dynamics, Reproduction and Ecology of the Ganga River Dolphin.
3. A research project on conservation of Dolphins in river Ganga was sanctioned under Ganga Action Plan from during 1991 to March 1996.
4. For preventing any poaching, the State Government keep a strict vigil by river patrolling.

Additional force to stop poaching of tigers

2103. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to delpoy additional forces to stop poaching of tigers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken on poachers who have been apprehended; and

(d) the details of the efforts to keep vigil to avoid incidents of tiger poaching in tiger parks of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Central Assistance is provided for deployment of special protection squads to complement the field staff, based on proposals received from States within the ambit of Project Tiger Guidelines.

(c) Such records are not maintained at the Government of India Level.

(d) The steps taken by the Government of India to protect tigers and other wildlife are at Statement. [Refer to the Statement appended to the Answer to *Unstarred Question No.* 2095 *(d)]*

National Afforestation Plan

†2104. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Forest Development Agency is set up with concurrence of the Central Government in forest divisions for implementation of forest development works under National Afforestation Plan;

(b) whether any consideration is paid on the prevalent weather, soil and biological pressures in different States while earmarking the optimum cost criterion for forest development works under the said scheme;

(c) whether any proposals from the Department of forests, Rajasthan have been received for amending the accepted cost criterion for fencing the free plantation areas; and

(d) whether the Central Government as per the request of Government of Rajasthan, propose to bring a provision for keeping flexibility in the optimum cost criterion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) As per the Guidelines of National Afforestation Programme (NAP), Forest Development Agencies (FDAs) are constituted at the level of territorial/ wild life forest divisions in the State, and registered as society under the Societies Registration Act. FDAs are receiving financial support from Government of India for implementation of afforestation projects under NAP.

(b) The NAP Guidelines provide for model cost norms for various components of the FDA projects based on existing labour wage rate of the State.

(c) Yes, Sir. Proposals have been received from Rajasthan Forest Department for increasing the cost norms for fencing under NAP.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.